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CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE BRITISH ARCHIVES
CONCERNING TEXAS, 1837-1846

IX

EDITED BY EPHRAIM DOUGLASS ADAMS

ABERDEEN TO ELLIOT¹

Draft.

F. O. Sepr. 18th 1843.

Captain Elliot.

No. 11.

Sir,

Your Despatches to No. 22 inclusive have been received and laid before the Queen.

With reference to your Despatch No 11 in which you convey the desire expressed by the Texian Govt that a British Consul Agent should be appointed at Corpus Christi Bay, I have to inform you that H. M. Govt. do not consider that such an appointment is necessary as yet.

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN²

Strictly Private.

British Consulate.

Galveston. Sepr 23d. 1843.

My Lord,

I had the honor to transmit to Your Lordship on the 29th of last Month, by Her Majesty's Sloop of War "Seylla," proceeding from Galveston to Vera Cruz, the copy of a Map of the Island of Mugerres, with the Survey of the Coast and Harbour, made by order of the Texan Commodore for the use of his Government.

Referring to my despatch marked "Private" and dated *August 6th*, I beg to state that I have *seen* the Signature of M. de Saligny, Minister from France to Texas, attached to a document to be used by the party holding it in the event of M. de Saligny's death. This document is in acknowledgment of certain claims of the holder to be recognized by France in case she shall obtain possession of the island in question.

¹F. O., Texas, Vol. 6. The letter is unsigned.

²F. O., Texas, Vol. 7.

Referring to my despatch marked "Private" and dated *September 6th*, I have to inform Your Lordship that recent accounts from the United States tend fully to establish the accuracy of the information conveyed to me by my Correspondent at New Orleans, and, in all important particulars, communicated to Your Lordship in that despatch.

It may be proper to mention that M. de Saligny has been absent in Europe more than a year, that the duties of French Chargé d' Affaires are discharged by a *locum tenens*, and that the friends of M. de S. in this place profess to anticipate his early return to his post.

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOTT TO ABERDEEN³

No. 28.⁴

My Lord,

I have had the honor to receive Your Lordship's despatch No. 10 inclosing the copy of a despatch to Mr. Percy Doyle dated on the 1st July.⁵ It has always appeared to me that the Course of the people of this Country concerning the final adjustment of their difficulties with Mexico will be entirely controlled, or at least mainly influenced by the purposes and proceedings of the Government and people of the United States.

Her Majesty's Government will have better means of judging of those purposes and proceedings than I can furnish from this quarter. But I can certainly perceive no grounds for modifying the opinions I have already had the honor to submit that the acknowledgment of the Independence of Texas by Mexico has always been ill liked by the present Government, and a large part of the people of the United States; that such a Solution has become much more unpopular throughout the whole Union since it

³F. O., Texas, Vol. 6.

⁴*Ibid.* Elliot to Aberdeen, Nos. 26 and 27, September 15, 1843, have been omitted. No. 26 treated of the *Eliza Russell* claims. No. 27 enclosed Houston's proclamation of September 4, 1843, permitting any Mexicans in Texas to repair to headquarters of General Woll, and also on this topic a copy of Jones to Elliot, September 4, 1843. This last in Garrison, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas*, III, 1125, in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1908, II.

⁵See page 193, note 4, above.

has been supposed to be favored by the Government of Her Majesty, and that of the King of the French; and lastly that if General Santa Aña be brought to act upon a material suggestion of Your Lordship's despatch 1st July to Mr. Doyle, this question will at once become one of great importance in the Affairs of this Continent.

Your Lordship is no doubt aware that there is considerable and growing uneasiness upon this subject throughout the South Western part of the Union, and the reports which reach us here through the press of the United States and other sources are noticeable because of the evidence they afford of that state of disquietude. We hear of the rights of Louisiana to all the territory as far West as the "Nuecas," of the determination of the people of that State to assert those rights for themselves if the General Government does not otherwise effectually interpose for the breaking up of any arrangement menacing, in their view, the stability of their Slave Institutions, of the renewal of General Jackson's negotiations for the purchase of Texas, and a variety of other rumours of the like nature.

It is commonly said here too, that the Conversation of the new Chargé d' Affaires from the United States, near this Government, (General Murphy), is unreservedly hostile to a settlement of the difficulties under any other auspices than those of his own Government, and I learn that at a late festive meeting he addressed a large assembly as his "Fellow Citizens." I take the liberty of mentioning this incident to Your Lordship, and [not?] that I attach much importance to it, for if His Government had any immediate purposes in view, this Gentleman would probably have been more circumspect than he seems to have been; but it causes a state of general feeling which I have thought it right to place under Your Lordship's attention. Indeed I would wish to mention that whilst it is my conviction that nothing can be more settled than the disinclination of a large part of the people of the United States to any adjustment of the affairs of Texas and directly carried out by their own Government and [not?] in what they understand to be their interests, it is equally my habit to receive the details of any reported project with the utmost reserve, and I certainly have had no means of forming any safe opinion as to the manner of interference in these concerns.

I am of course sensible that much that is said and written in the United States on the subject deserves no attention but I believe that I have made no mistake as to the real state of feeling in respect to it, and I have considered it proper at this conjuncture to repeat the impression.

It is to be supposed that this uneasy treatment of the acknowledgment of the Independence of Texas by Mexico upon liberal arrangements with respect to the Slave population, must help to satisfy Genl Santa Aña of the soundness of that course for the strength and safety of his own Country. And if he bases his policy upon that condition, granting an amply sufficient period to this Government for deliberation, and liberal limiting proposals, (for it will need both time, and favorable concomitant terms to prepare the people to adopt such a combination) I believe he will succeed in accomplishing a signal political triumph, lastingly honorable to his fame both as a Statesman, and a benefactor of Mankind.

One great practical advantage of the proposal of Mexico to acknowledge the Independence of Texas upon the condition to which Your Lordship has adverted, would be the indisposition of the Slave holders of the United States to bring any more of their people into this Country with the prospect of that conclusion before them, or with the prospect of a renewal of hostilities upon such a ground, if Texas refused such a condition. It is a very material consideration in this subject, that the Cotton growing capabilities of Texas are superior to those of the United States; and if the principle of free labor can be established here, what with the opportunity of procuring labor from Mexico, and by immigration from other quarters, and the increasing supply and improvement of the Staple from India, there would be very soon an end of the remunerative production of Cotton by Slave labor in the United States.

The supply from Texas this year will amount to nearly 100,000 Bales (a considerable portion of it the produce of free labor) and if peace can be secured upon the terms Your Lordship has suggested, I entertain no doubt whatever that the Supply from Texas will exceed a Million of bales within 10 years from the date of such an arrangement. That supply must be exchanged chiefly against British Manufactures; And unless the tariffs of the

United States, and the recent one of Mexico are very soon abated, it is easy to foresee that this Country will rapidly come to be the Seat of a considerable trade.

Charles Elliot.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

P. S.

I shall take the liberty of providing a Copy of this despatch to Mr. Doyle.

C. E.

ADDINGTON TO ELLIOT⁶

Draft.

F. O. October 3, 1843.

Captain Elliot.

Sir,

In reply to your despatch marked "*Separate*" of the 4th of Augt. in which you request to be transferred to some other post, on the ground of ill health, I am directed by the Earl of Aberdeen to acquaint you that His Lordship regrets that he can not hold out any hopes of being enabled to comply with your request; but His Lordship directs me to add that if you are desirous of obtaining temporary leave of absence for the restoration of your health, His Lordship will very willingly grant it.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN⁷

Private.

Galveston. October 10th 1843.

My Lord.

I have the honor to acquaint Your Lordship that the Commissioners from this Government for the Settlement of the Difficulties with Mexico, Mr. Samuel M. Williams and Colonel George Hockley will sail for Matamoros tomorrow or next day.

Their immediate object will be the arrangement of the terms of the Armistice, but I collect from them that they will not be able to go on to Mexico till Congress here shall have meet and sanctioned the necessary appropriation

I beg leave to forward herewith the Copy of a letter of introduction⁸ which I have taken the liberty to give the Commissioners to Her Majesty's Chargé d' Affaires at Mexico, as also the copy

⁶F. O., Texas, Vol. 6. The letter is unsigned and unnumbered.

⁷F. O., Texas, Vol. 6.

⁸Not transcribed.

of another private letter addressed to that Gentleman by this occasion.

Charles Elliot.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO DOYLE⁹

Private.

Galveston October 10th 1843

My dear Sir.

The departure of the Commissioners for Matamoros affords me an opportunity to write to you a few lines. You will observe by the extracts from the American papers in the accompanying Newspapers that they are rather excited upon the subject of British interference in the Southern Sections of that part of the World.

I trust that Mexico will be true to the great cause of humanity, and to itself, on this momentous occasion. The mere announcement of their just and honorable determination that a land which was free under their rule should not be turned into a Pen of Slaves for the convenience of persons possessing such property in the exhausted Slave States of the North American Union would of itself be a very important step towards the establishment and security of the due and needful weight of Mexico in the affairs of this Continent. They have but to signify that the sine qua non conditions of their acknowledgment of Texas by Mexico are decided and approved measures for the early and final disappearance of Slavery here, and formal adherence to the declaration of Mexico that the Independence is recognised and understood to be *complete*, whilst Texas remains a Separate Nation, but if [of] non effect in the case that it should annex itself to any other Country, without the consent of Mexico. Such a policy on the part of Mexico in the present emergency will have the effect of turning evil into good to it's lasting honor, and disaster into safety and advantage, interposing more effectual barriers against encroaching purposes from the other side of the "Sabine," than the best lines of military defence, maintained in strong force, and the most effectual manner.

I said in my note to you a few days since that I am satisfied General Santa Aña may consent to a truce of very liberal dura-

⁹F. O., Texas, Vol. 6.

tion (it matters not how long) if He causes it to be publicly understood at the same time that no combination of circumstances would ever induce Mexico to conclude a definitive arrangement with Texas till perfectly satisfactory arrangements were made for the Abolition of Slavery within some reasonable space of time, and on the contrary that Mexico is prepared to adjust finally on the most liberal footing as soon as that difficulty is removed.

No more Slaves will be brought into Texas after such a declaration of the Mexican Government, and the tide of immigration from the Slave States will be at once arrested; but there will be, instead, a very large immigration from the free States of the Union (orderly people that come to work for their bread in peace, not to idle away their time in the hope of profitable adventure into Mexico), and from quarters in Europe well affected to Mexico, chiefly directed to the frontier conterminous with Mexico, which is the region of Texas best suited to European Constitutions. If hostilities are resumed again (a very unlikely event after such a declaration of the Mexican Government), that Government would find itself in an attitude of great importance and force in this part of the World. The people of the United States are given to keen speculative calculation, and that prospect would present to them the possibility of Mexican Arms marching forward into Texas with proclamation that Slavery had no legal existence *as far West as the "Sabine,"* that the disabilities of people of Colour whether of the mixed Indian or African races were in like manner non-existent within those limits, that the lands in Texas held by Settlers not possessed of Slaves, or willing to manumit them, should be confirmed to them provided they hold themselves neuter to the contest, and finally that sympathy from the S. W. States of America would be answered with sympathizing invitations to the Black and Coloured people of all races in those regions to pass over to the right bank of the "Sabine" where they would find less talk about the rights of Man, and a little rational enjoyment of them. Such reflections as these would assuredly present [a barrier?] to the blustering part of the population here and in the United States, immediately upon the public signification of the policy of the Mexican Government to have fast peace with Texas as soon as Texas saw fit to place Itself in a really independent attitude, as respected the S. W. States of America, in-

stead of one of advanced post of aggression against Mexico, which it will continue to be till Mexico has the sound wisdom to sever the tie that connects Texas with those States.

Added to the high honor and other force that Mexico would derive from this policy, there should be joined the reflection of that certain distraction and violence as in the Councils of the United States sure to follow any attempt of the S. W. States to force on a War with Mexico, arising out of any just measures for it's honor and safety, as to the Abolition of Slavery in Texas, which was a violation of the Constitution of Mexico from it's very commencement. The best and wisest Statesmen of the United States fully comprehend that it is for the well understood interest and safety of their own Country that Slavery should not be suffered to extend in a S. W. direction. They are opposed to it both on lofty moral principle, and upon grounds of policy; and if Mexico acts upon the suggestion which has been made from London, I believe there need be no serious apprehension of anything worse than a great deal of talk. If there be any unreasonable faltering in that particular, I believe on the contrary that the intrigues which I am persuaded are ripening, will occasion some very serious inconvenience.

I make you no excuse for troubling you with these thoughts because I am sure you will feel that I do so in some hope they may help the public Service, and I need not say that it will give me great pleasure to attend to any suggestions which you think may serve the like purpose in this quarter

Charles Elliot.

Copy

Charles Elliot

[Endorsed] Inclosure No. 2. in Captain Elliot's private despatch to the Earl of Aberdeen Octr. 10th 1843.

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN¹⁰

No. 7.

British Consulate.

Galveston October 11th. 1843.

My Lord,

I have the honor to enclose a Return in duplicate of the prices

¹⁰F. O., Texas, Vol. 7.

of Indian Corn, Cotton and hides at the Port of Galveston, for the Quarter ending 30th. Ultimo.

I shall take an early opportunity of transmitting a General Report respecting the Trade of this Country, which I have held over, for the purpose of rendering it as correct as possible. To arrive at statistical accuracy in an extensive and thinly peopled Country, where intelligence is not always enlisted on the side of truth, and where the Machinery of internal administration is of necessity very imperfect, is an extremely difficult task.

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.